



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Thursday, July 11, 2019
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Family Justice Center 5th Floor Conference Room
600 Jefferson Plaza, Suite 500, Rockville, Maryland 20852

Minutes

Attendees: Debbie Feinstein, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Tom Manion, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Teresa Bennett (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); Ingrid Gonzalez (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); Acting Chief Marcus Jones (Montgomery County Department of Police); The Honorable Sidney Katz, (Montgomery County Council); Tina Michaels (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Eshigo Okasili (Community Member); Ronald Whalen (Community Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Absent: Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); Lilah Katz (Student Member); Cheryl Kravitz (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member);

Guests: Lisa Mandel Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Ngozi Obineme (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Lt. Brian Tanzi (Montgomery County Department of Police); Spencer Cantrell (Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse); Alia El Radi (House of Ruth Maryland);

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Approval of May Minutes

The May 9, 2019 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Councilmember Sidney Katz proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Eshigo Okasili and passed.

III. Announcements

Spencer Cantrell announced that the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse is hiring a Victim Advocate.

Judge Ferretti announced that her law clerk is looking for a position as a domestic violence attorney.

Smita Varia announced that Judge Smith received the Advocacy Award from the Montgomery County (MD) Delta Alumnae Foundation, Inc. for her work on domestic violence. Councilmember Sidney Katz presented the award to her.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Education and Outreach Committee - *Debbie Feinstein, Chair*

Debbie Feinstein updated the Council on current Education and Outreach Initiatives. The committee would like to facilitate a more targeted outreach to different faith communities. The goal is to let Houses of Worship to know about the services available at the FJC. Previous FJC interns have collected the names and contact information for different house of worship. At the next DVCC meeting, the list will be distributed to the members to see if anyone has any connections. Teresa Bennett also suggested addressing domestic violence during premarital counseling that churches provide.

As a result of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT), one recommendation is to educate victims on the dangers of strangulation and other violent acts that lead to high lethality. Smita Varia created High Lethality Resource Cards that identifies risk factors of lethal abuse and resources for help, to be distributed by service providers or first responders. This card is being vetted by the Shady Grove Forensic Nurses for accuracy of information.

The FJC Multi Language Outreach Cards are continuing to be distributed to hospitals, doctor's offices, salons, and yoga studios.

Debbie Feinstein announced that instead of having the yearly Choose Respect conference, the Choose Respect Committee decided to hold a community festival in Spring 2020 featuring information booths, resource booths, food trucks, performances and the annual PSA contest. The Choose Respect Festival will potentially be on March 29th. The committee has decided to have a Student Advisory Committee to help with planning the event. The festival will be at either a school or at a Recreation Center.

The Expect Respect presentations are continuing over the summer during summer school classes, the State's Attorney's Office Summer Academy and at the Montgomery County Corrections Facility for youthful offenders. Facilitators are applying for access to the Alfred Noyes Children's Center to facilitate the workshop for the juveniles in detention.

B. Victim Services Committee update - *Tom Manion, Chair*

Tom Manion updated the Council on current Victim Services Initiatives. The committee is continuing to work on the Pet Safety Program with the Police Department's Animal Services and Adoption Center and the Humane Society. Unfortunately, the Humane Society hasn't been available to continue discussions, but the committee will move forward with the partnership with the Police Department's Animal Services and Adoption Center.

Tom Manion presented statistics on the Betty Ann Krahnke Center's discharges and reasons for leaving the shelter. The majority of clients were discharged to live with family or a friend, a hotel or in a new home. However, some clients left with an unfavorable discharge because they violated the shelter rules or left and never returned. The committee will analyze the data and identify opportunities for new initiatives or interventions.

Safe Start, the County's therapy program for children who witness domestic violence, and Bar-T, a childcare organization, partnered together to offer free camp to 60 children at two Bar-T summer camp locations. The children will enjoy camp in addition to ongoing therapy with Safe Start Therapists.

The Victim Services Committee is currently identifying the barriers and gaps present in connecting clients with free attorneys. They are also working on ways to increase the network of pro-bono attorneys who would be able to represent FJC clients during protective order hearings. Ayuda is joining the FJC as an off-site referral source for foreign-born clients to assist with protective orders and family law.

The Victim Services Committee is interested in being able to offer medical services onsite at the FJC. Tom Manion is collecting data on injuries and strangulation for all cases that come through the FJC to assess the need for medical services.

C. Offender Program and Policy Committee – *Tina Michaels, Chair*

Tina Michaels gave an update on initiatives that the Offender Program and Policy Committee is working on. The committee has been discussing how to reach more people with the Abuser Intervention Program. One idea is to adapt the program for juveniles who are offenders. The committee is also discussing how to facilitate the program to those offenders that are currently incarcerated on domestic violence offenses, especially since those are the most violent. Currently, offenders are able to participate in the program during Pre-Trial supervision, at the Pre-Release Center and during probation. Teresa Bennett had one idea to offer offenders an incentive to participate in the program. She suggested that if offenders complete the program successfully, they would be able to increase either their supervised visitation or earn visits with their children through the Safe Passage Center.

The committee has also been talking about how it is important to keep Bond conditions and Protective order conditions the same. This is also something being discussed in the Judicial Working Group.

Debbie Feinstein mentioned that during a meeting she was attending as part of the Governor's Family Violence Council, they were talking about Pre-Trial Services in the state and what they are able to do with offenders. Debbie shared with the group that Montgomery County is able to facilitate the AIP program during pre-trial supervision and that the county may be one of the few if not only county that does that. The Governor's Family Violence Council is now going to constitute a Working Group to look at these issues statewide and will need the expertise of Montgomery County to be a part of those discussions.

D. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – *Acting Chief Marcus Jones, Chair*

Acting Chief Marcus Jones reported that the committee will meet in late August, and if there are any issues that members of the Council think the committee should explore, please let the committee know. Debbie Feinstein mentioned introducing a bill to require non-fatal strangulation be included in the 1st degree assault statute.

V. Adjournment

Debbie Feinstein, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.

The next DVCC meeting will be on September 12, 2019, 5pm-7pm at the Family Justice Center



Domestic Violence Coordinating Council